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The Arbitration Treaties: an Inventory.

Some of the journals of the country, accustomed to summarize at its close the chief events of the year, have given a prominent place in their recent reviews to the arbitration treaties signed during 1904; others have passed them by with little or no notice, as if they had but small significance.

It is indeed a most happy circumstance that we are able to begin the new year with so many of these conventions actually signed and so many more in process of negotiation. What has been done in this direction has marked the year 1904 as one of the most important in the entire history of the international peace movement.

Since our December issue Mr. Hay has signed two further treaties, namely, with Great Britain and Italy, making six in all signed by our government since the first of November. These two follow the lines of the former treaties. It had been hoped that at least the treaty with Great Britain would be drawn on larger lines, as the relations between the two countries are now such as to justify the hope that all disputes that may hereafter arise between them will be easily adjusted by pacific means. But

the treaty as it is is a very important convention, seeing that it is one of a group the signers of which include nearly all the important powers. A number of other treaties between our government and others are also nearly completed and ready for signature.

When these treaties will be sent in to the Senate by the President we can only guess. They will probably have been handed in by the time this paper reaches our readers. If so, every influence ought to be brought to bear at once, by personal letter and otherwise, for their prompt ratification. Unexpected opposition to them is reported to have arisen among Senators. Some criticise them because they are too limited in scope and mean nothing; others because they go too far, and expose us to entanglement and danger.

We cannot yet believe that this opposition will develop into anything serious. What the Ancient Order of Hibernians have said against the treaties seems to be so entirely fanciful that it is difficult to see how it can influence any Senator to oppose ratification. How a treaty of such limited scope, to run for only five years, can put us under the power of England or any other country to our hurt, is more than an ordinary mortal can conceive. The other reasons put forward against the treaties, from the point of view of the Monroe doctrine, etc., are still more irrational, and will certainly carry no weight.

The most serious ground for fear that some have given is that there is a group of prominent and influential men in the Senate who are essentially opposed to the whole movement out of which the arbitration treaties spring, and are opposed to any steps whatever in the direction in which they lead. It is incredible that this should be true at this late stage of the triumphant progress of arbitration, when the Hague Court is in successful operation, and the whole civilized world is rallying to the standard of arbitration, and we shall believe it only when we see evidences of it cropping out after the treaties are before the Senate.

Not only has the negotiation of treaties gone steadily on in our country since our last issue, but in other countries as well. The list of treaties signed, so far as it has come to our knowledge, is now as follows: Great Britain and France, France and Italy, Great Britain and Italy, Denmark and The Netherlands, France and Spain, Great Britain and Spain, Spain and Portugal, France and The Netherlands, France and Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and

Norway and Sweden, Great Britain and Germany, Great Britain and Austria, Russia and Belgium, the United States and France, the United States and Germany, the United States and Switzerland, the United States and Portugal, Switzerland and Great Britain, Switzerland and Italy, Switzerland and Belgium, Switzerland and France, the United States and Great Britain, and the United States and Italy.

This list we are sure is not complete, though it contains all the treaties that we have seen reported in the press as actually signed. There are at least a dozen others under way; but it is a splendid array as it is—twenty-four treaties which cross and re-cross among thirteen of the important civilized powers and unite them together into a bond of friendship and peace, which we may with real reason believe will never be broken again. There is certainly ground for entering on the New Year's work with unusual confidence and rejoicing.

Mr. Hay's Second Note on the Proposed New International Conference.

The second note of Secretary Hay to the powers, in regard to the proposed new intergovernmental conference at The Hague, which our readers will find on another page of this paper, seems to have given rise to a good deal of misconception on the part of not a few persons. Some have interpreted it to mean that the proposal for the Conference has been virtually withdrawn, and that the United States government has abandoned its initiative in the matter.

What has given rise to this misconception is Mr. Hay's statement that the Conference will probably have to be deferred for a time, on account of the war in the East, and also the method which he has suggested for its organization. But that our government has in any sense withdrawn the proposition, and that the project will go no further, is a very erroneous interpretation.

Mr. Hay's note first recites the general favor with which his suggestion of the holding of the Conference was received by the powers. In this respect the answer to the invitation was all that could have been expected or even desired, with at most two exceptions. Japan had answered that, while favoring the Conference, she desired that it might not in any way affect the present war. Russia had replied, not that she opposed the Conference, but that she could not take part in it until after the close of the war. That of course made it unadvisable to push the work of preparing for the meeting too rapidly forward, as the holding of it without the participation of Russia would have been most inexpedient. But the general favor with which the first note of our government was received makes the holding of the Conference certain at the earliest practicable date.

The course which Mr. Hay has suggested as to the preparation of the program and the selection of the date of the meeting, etc., is an eminently wise and statesmanlike thought. It was done in part with the view of avoiding any appearance of a wish or purpose on the part of our government to attempt to dominate or control the Conference, and that all the governments, small as well as great, might feel that they were to enter its deliberations on an equality with the rest, and with an opportunity to have their fair share of influence. Mr. Hay has suggested, therefore, in the present note, that the arrangements for the Conference, the preparation of the program, etc., shall be made through the Bureau of the Administrative Council of the Hague Court, who shall act as an international committee on behalf of all the powers.

If this suggestion proves acceptable to the powers, as it certainly will, then the members of this Administrative Council, which consists of all the Foreign Ministers accredited to The Netherlands government, thirty or more in number, will be instructed by their several governments to proceed together to perfect the plans for the Conference. They will, on suggestions and instructions received from their several governments, prepare the details of the program, the subjects, that is, to be considered, the date of the meeting, and will then arrange with The Netherlands government to issue the formal invitation to the powers to send delegates, as was done in 1899.

The course suggested by the Secretary of State shows great political sagacity. There exists in this Administrative Council, whose members reside at The Hague, the nucleus of a world organization, and the utilization of it as an International Committee to prepare for the Conference will further habituate the governments to moving together in important matters which concern them all. This body of over thirty men, most of whom are diplomats of long experience, and many of whom were at The Hague and took part in the Conference of 1899, will be able to work out a more practicable and satisfactory program for the Conference than the State Department of any one country could possibly do.

Diplomatic considerateness and courtesy will, without doubt, under the circumstances, give to the United States Minister at The Hague a prominent place in the work of the Council, and will also insure the putting upon the program of practically all the important subjects mentioned in Mr. Hay's note of October 21 last. The arrangements will also, we are sure, include an invitation to all the governments of Central and South America to send representatives to the Conference. These governments all have diplomatic representatives at Washington, as they did not have at St. Petersburg in 1898, and the mention of them in Mr. Hay's call for the Conference